

REMARKS

I. Introduction

In response to the Office Action dated January 17, 2006, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of claim 6 and to further clarify the present invention. Claim 6 has been cancelled. No new matter has been added. In addition, the specification has been amended to correct any inadvertent errors.

For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art references.

II. The Rejection Of Claims 1, 2 And 4-6 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Pearlstein et al. (U.S. 3,754,939). Applicant respectfully submits that Pearlstein et al. fails to anticipate the pending claims for at least the following reasons.

With regard to the present invention, amended claim 1 recites a method for producing conductive particles comprising the steps of: introducing a solution composed mainly of palladium chloride and hydrochloric acid into an electroless plating bath containing particles of an organic material or an inorganic material while stirring said bath; and simultaneously applying an electroless plating to the surface of said particles and allowing the palladium catalyst to be carried on the surface of said particles to give conductive particles having an electroless plate coating, wherein said electroless plate coating comprises at least one selected from the group consisting of Ni, Ni-P, Ni-B, Cu, an Ni-PTFE composite coating and a Cu-PTFE composite coating.

As the claim indicates, the palladium contained in the solution of the present invention functions as a catalyst. Due to the action of this catalyst, a plate coating of the above cited metals can be formed without performing a pretreatment process, unlike conventional methods that require pretreatments such as sensitizing step or activation step (see, page 1, line 18-page 2, line 3 of the specification). Thus, *the palladium is not a component of the coating*.

In contrast to the claimed invention, Pearlstein forms a plate coating composed of palladium alloy deposits (see, Table II, and col. 1, lines 12-24 and col. 4, lines 39-52). There is no mention anywhere in the Pearlstein reference that any of the above cited metals or metal alloys (Ni, Ni-P, Ni-B, Cu, Ni-PTFE, Cu-PTFE) are used as the coating material. Thus, Pearlstein fails to disclose a method for producing conductive particles wherein said electroless plate coating comprises at least one selected from the group consisting of Ni, Ni-P, Ni-B, Cu, an Ni-PTFE composite coating and a Cu-PTFE composite coating.

Furthermore, Pearlstein teaches that the palladium chloride is incorporated in the bath composition in advance. This is in contrast to the present invention, in which the palladium is added to the bath. Thus, Pearlstein fails to disclose the step of introducing a solution composed mainly of palladium chloride and hydrochloric acid into an electroless plating bath containing particles of an organic material or an inorganic material.

Anticipation under 35 U.S.C. § 102 requires that each and every element of the claim be disclosed, either expressly or inherently in a prior art reference, *Akzo N.V. v. U.S. Int'l Trade Commission*, 808 F.2d 1471 (Fed. Cir. 1986), and Pearlstein et al. does not disclose the claim elements noted above. Therefore, as it is apparent from the foregoing that Pearlstein fails to anticipate claim 1 or any dependent claims thereon, the Applicant respectfully requests that the § 102 rejection be traversed.

III. All Dependent Claims Are Allowable Because The Independent Claim From Which They Depend Is Allowable

Under Federal Circuit guidelines, a dependent claim is nonobvious if the independent claim upon which it depends is allowable because all the limitations of the independent claim are contained in the dependent claims, *Hartness International Inc. v. Simplimatic Engineering Co.*, 819 F.2d at 1100, 1108 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Accordingly, as claim 1 is patentable for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that all pending dependent claims are also in condition for allowance.

IV. Conclusion

Having responded to all open issues set forth in the Office Action, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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